DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 198 109 SP 017 408

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TITLE Follow-up: The Missing Element of Staff Development.
INSTITUTION Maine Mastery Learning Consortium, Gardiner.
PUB DATE Dec 80
NOTE 14p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adoption (Ideas); *Cooperative Programs; *Followup Studies; *Inservice Teacher Education; Postsecondary Education; *Program Implementation; School Districts; Staff Development; Teacher Education Programs; *Teacher Improvement; Teacher Workshops

ABSTRACT

The Maine Mastery Learning Consortium, composed of sixteen school districts, was formed because it was learned that the money and time spent in staff development without follow-up rarely resulted in significant classroom change or successful classroom implementation. This document reports on the first three months of a project designed to provide ongoing classroom assistance to teachers implementing a complex program. The Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction (ECRI), a validated mastery learning program, was used, requiring three one-week sessions for teachers. A fee schedule based on pupil enrollment paid the salary of the two trainers, and the school districts paid the travel and per diem costs. The trainers spent from three to 25 days on site, offering several activities: content demonstrations, observations, conferences, mini-workshops, awareness sessions, and team teaching. Difficulties in scheduling and in trainer burnout are noted. Appendices contain a sample trainer schedule, follow-up checklists, and an onsite assessment form. (FG)

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ED198109

FOLLOW-UP: THE MISSING ELEMENT OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT

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December, 1980

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SP 017 408

FOLLOW-UP: THE MISSING ELEMENT OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Sara R. Massey

Critics and advocates of staff development for educators have lamented the absence of assistance in helping teachers implement what is learned during workshops, courses, and training programs. Fifty teachers participate in a workshop, but little changes in the classroom. Teachers may try to implement their learnings, but some kind of post-training assistance is needed in the practical application if teachers are to be successful in their use of the new learning. Post-training classroom assistance is rarely provided because 1) it is perceived as too expensive to keep the consultants on-site, 2) the consultants won't work in the classroom because they don't have the time or capacity, 3) it's impossible to rearrange teachers' classes, or 4) it causes too much disruption for students. These factors are real barriers to the provision of post-training (follow-up) assistance, but they can be resolved.

The Maine Mastery Learning Consortium, composed of sixteen school districts from throughout a large, rural state, was formed to address these problems. Could a mechanism be created that would:

1. Provide ongoing classroom assistance after training (follow-up) to teachers in their implementation of a complex program;
2. Be cost-effective;
3. Cause minimal disruption in the school day; and
4. Result in the long-term, successful use of the program by teachers?

Between September, 1980, and June, 1981, two trainers are providing a total of 135 days of in classroom assistance to teachers in the use of the Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction (ECRI), a validated mastery learning program.

FEB 2 1981

The program uses the existing reading texts of the schools, but requires extensive materials preparation by teachers. It is a complex and difficult program for teachers to implement successfully because it is inclusive of all aspects of reading instruction, i,e. vocabulary, study skills, comprehension, writing, etc. and because it requires new behaviors, such as clear objectives, immediate reinforcement, modeling, criterion testing, active student engagement, etc., on the part of most teachers. Training for this program requires three one-week sessions, preferrably spread over two years. Training provides teachers with information, some materials, and some practice time with other adults in the training. Training is rarely provided for one teacher in a building, but rather for groups of teachers so that some peer support is possible. Still the training is not enough if teachers are to be successful in their use of ECRI.

A fee schedule based on pupil enrollment was developed whereby school districts would buy on-site trainer days for classroom follow-up. The fees would pay the salary for a trainer(s) and school districts would pay the trainer's travel and per diem costs. The trainer's day on-site ranged from three to twenty-five days. Costs were kept to a minimum by scheduling the days in two, three-day blocks with trainers staying overnight with teachers with whom they were working in the district. The specific dates for follow-up were submitted by the districts in September and a nine-month projected calendar was developed.

A contact person for each district was designated by the superintendent to serve as a liason with the trainer(s). The liason's responsibilities included:

1. Meeting with teachers to determine who wanted what kind of help (content and format) was desired;

2. Developing the on-site schedule for the trainer;

3. Arranging class coverage for teachers to observe;

4. Arranging overnight accommodations for the trainer;

5. Serving as the communications contact between the teachers and trainer;

6. Scheduling visitations by teachers to teacher's classrooms in other districts using the program.

One month prior to each visit to a school site a form is sent to the contact person (Appendix A). The form is completed and returned to the trainer two weeks prior to the visit, so that specific materials for classroom use can be prepared and any new presentations developed.

The on-site work of trainers takes many forms and seems to be evolutionary in nature as the trainer keeps returning to the district. The format options possible regardless of content and grade level are:

1. Demonstrate various skills the teacher(s) what to see modeled in order to implement ECRI.

2. Team-teach with a teacher. The trainer and the teacher work together to improve a teacher's usage of the ECRI techniques.

3. Observation of a teacher in order to diagnose and prescribe more efficient ways to implement the ECRI program.

4. Conference with the teachers and administrators to answer questions, coordinate inter-school/district visits, etc.

5. Awareness sessions to present information to parents, teachers, administrators about ECRI.

6. Jam sessions to present information, answer questions and concerns and to share information.

7. Mini-workshops to present a one-two hour session on some aspect of the program that is now relevant to using teachers.

A typical trainer's day might include four different content demonstrations with four teachers and their classes at various grade levels, two observations with two conferences, a jam session with eight teachers, and a conference with the principal. (Appendix A) Evenings are spent driving to the next site,

preparing materials for the next day or completing report forms. A trainer's job is not easy and it's questionable whether any trainer can sustain this type of schedule for more than two-three years. Where driving long distances is not a factor as in urban areas continuation of trainers may not be a factor.

A strategy presently being explored to obtain trainers for follow-up assistance is 1) to identify one or two model teachers using the program within the state, 2) to provide them with additional consultation, training, and skills, 3) to negotiate a one year's leave of absence from the school, 4) to pay their salary for a year and use to provide follow-up, and 5) then they return to their classrooms as a valuable resource person at the end of the year's leave. Many school districts are amiable to this plan as the teachers return with new skills and expertise.

Scheduling a trainer's on-site day to get maximum benefit of her time is difficult. Doing the same demonstration in four classrooms quickly becomes a drag, but liason persons are learning ways to resolve this problem. Since the demonstrations or team teaching is usually of short duration, thirty minutes, 1) administrators or specialists will take the teacher's class to read aloud to the students or discuss school issues, or 2) teachers bring their class into the demonstration classroom, sitting around the edges or on the floor and everyone observes. Teacher conferences occur at lunch, during planning periods, after school, or at recess. Jam sessions are held over bag lunches, after school, or in the evening if more appropriate.

Also a part of follow-up assistance is developing the capacity of an in-district resource person. This does not mean hiring another person. The district identifies a person who is knowledgeable in the program who others normally seek out for help. Once this person is identified, the trainer provides other kinds of assistance to help them develop as resource persons.

This assistance may be providing them with different material such as lists of commonly asked questions, reference articles, addresses for hard-to-locate materials, plans for doing presentations or awareness sessions, or materials for parent presentations.

Additionally, during the year special workshops can be delivered on a regional basis. In the past, the trainer(s) has conducted 1) regional sharing conferences in ECRI, 2) short training sessions for administrators and supervisors who can support teachers in their use, and 3) problem-solving sessions for resource people. In deciding to schedule special sessions though it's important not to forget the basic need is still in-class follow-up assistance to individual teachers. It is more time efficient to centralize group sessions, but invariably the sessions become too general and not specific enough for individual teacher needs.

Trainers keep track of their work in much the same way teachers do. There is a manilla folder for each school district which contains a) a list of teachers trained at what level, b) a copy of the visitation schedule, c) a summary sheet on each teacher worked with on-site, and d) copies of the assessment form completed by teachers on the follow-up assistance. (Appendix B) Additionally, a monthly log of their work is kept, expense forms are completed for invoicing the school district, and letters are written to the people they stayed with and the liason person.

All this may seem like a lot of work to help teachers learn to successfully use a new approach in the classroom. But what we have learned from the past is that the money and time spent in staff development without follow-up rarely results in significant classroom change or successful classroom implementation of a new program. School administrators and teachers in Maine have learned this and have joined together to get the range of staff development they want through the Maine Mastery Learning Consortium.

MAINE MASTERY LEARNING CONSORTIUM
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TO: MMLC CONTACT PERSONS

FROM: Jan Ellis, Training Coordinator

RE: ECRI Follow-Up Information

DATE:

_____ is coming to visit your school on _____ to work with ECRI teachers and administrators.

Ways the trainer can be useful:

1. Demonstrate various skills the teacher(s) need to see modeled in order to implement ECRI.

2. Team-teach with a teacher. The trainer and the teacher work together to improve a teacher's usage of the ECRI techniques.

3. Observation of a teacher in order to diagnose and prescribe more efficient ways to implement the ECRI program.

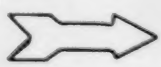
4. Conference with the teachers and administrators to answer questions, coordinate inter-school/district visits, etc.

5. Awareness sessions to present information to parents, teachers, administrators.

6. Jam session to present information, answer questions and concerns and to share information.

Please send the information that is needed at least two weeks before the trainer's visit using the form enclosed in order that they may develop and collect the necessary resources.

READ ON



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PLEASE RETURN THIS SHEET AND THE SCHEDULE TO THE CONSORTIUM OFFICE AT LEAST TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO VISIT DATE.

A. Name of School _____

District _____

Contact Person _____

Business Phone _____

Home Phone _____

B. We would like you to demonstrate/team teach (please give SPECIFIC skill and grade level, e.g. literal, main idea, grade 2).

Skill: _____ Grade: _____

Skill: _____ Grade: _____

Skill: _____ Grade: _____

Skill: _____ Grade: _____

Skill: _____ Grade: _____

Skill: _____ Grade: _____

Skill: _____ Grade: _____

Skill: _____ Grade: _____

Skill: _____ Grade: _____

Skill: _____ Grade: _____

Materials needed for demonstrations are to be provided by the ECRI teacher in your school. If there is any confusion about the materials, please call the MMLC office or 582-4702, Jan Ellis, or Elaine Roberts.

NEXT PAGE

ECRI

* SAMPLE SCHEDULE *

Jan Ellis at Nathan Clifford Elementary School

Morning - October 23, 1980

8:00 - 9:00 a.m. - Jan checks materials and confers with Cindy & Sally in Room #14.

9:00 - 10:10 a.m. - Cindy Lash - Room #7 - Jan and Cindy team teach Dictation, Spelling to 3 groups. Jan observes Penmanship.

Observing	Supervising Children
Allen	Mariner
Manning	Jones
Ray	Coombs

10:15 - 10:45 a.m. - Lash and Ellis confer

11:00 - 12:15 p.m. - Sally Oaks - Room #2 - Jan demonstrates Comprehension - model and prompt details, practice characters and teach new words to a skills group. Jan and Sally team teach Practice Time for approximately 30 minutes.

Observing	Supervising Children
Allen	Yates
Johnson	Mitchell
Shafto	Harris

12:15 - 1:15 p.m. Sally and Jan confer and lunch

Afternoon -

1:30 - 2:30 p.m. - Jan confers and visits with resource room/Special Education teachers

2:30 - 3:00 p.m. - Jan visits and confers with Principal

3:00 - 4:15 p.m. - 'Jam Session' with all ECRI teachers from Nathan Clifford and Riverton Schools

FOLLOW-UP CHECKLIST

FOR

COORDINATOR
(Do Not Return)

The following is a checklist for you to use in organizing the ECRI follow-up day(s). It is for your use and should not be returned to MMLC.

Three weeks to one month in advance of visit:

1. _____ Meet with all ECRI teachers involved to determine their specific needs.

2. _____ Be sure that ECRI teachers whose classrooms are being used for demonstrations and team teaching/observation are doing so voluntarily.

3. _____ See if a "Jam Session" should be scheduled with ECRI teachers/reading consultants/administrators. OR see if a mini presentation should be made on a specific topic.

4. _____ Confer with all ECRI teachers to suggest that questions be written down prior to Jam Session (by the end of a teaching day, teachers are exhausted and questions raised prior to trainer's visit may not come to mind).

5. _____ Consider asking the reading consultant/supervisor/administrator or mastery learning specialist to be available to accompany the consultant in each school. (The trainer does not know the layout of your school.)

6. Scheduling

   _____ Allow 1/2 hour prior to the consultant's observing/demonstrating/team teaching to confer with ECRI teachers directly involved and to familiarize herself with materials to be used.

   _____ Allow enough time for any observing/demonstrating/team teaching to be scheduled in order for consultant to be effective for your teachers.

   _____ Allow 15-30 minutes immediately after observation/demonstration for consultant and ECRI teacher to confer - lunchtime and recesses can be utilized or if this is impossible, time after school to speak to each ECRI teacher individually.

(OVER)

_____ Send a schedule of visit to all teachers/aides/administrators involved one week in advance of follow-up day(s).

a. time(s)
b. date(s)
c. teacher(s) name(s) and grade level(s) whose classroom is involved with observation/demonstration/team teaching
d. teacher(s) name(s) who are to observe demonstration(s)
    1. where
    2. when
    3. names of people covering classes
e. specific skill(s) to be demonstrated
f. time, place, date of 'Jam Session'
g. classroom coverage

_____ Check to see if you can schedule one demonstration of the same skill and let all interested teachers/administrators observe as opposed to scheduling the same demonstration three or more times, e.g. five demonstrations of spelling instruction may not be an effective use of time or money.

7. _____ Two weeks prior to visit send to the MMLC office the schedule and directions to your school.

8. _____ Meet with teachers just prior to the follow-up day to:

a. Explain to ECRI teachers that the ECRI consultant is not evaluating them but wants to see how the technique is utilized and is progressing, and, most importantly, to help the ECRI teachers.

b. Make sure each teacher and student has a name tag. (This is necessary in order for trainers to call on specific children.)

c. Remind teacher(s) to have materials ready.

d. Make sure each person has a schedule for day(s).

e. Arrangements for class coverage are completed as necessary.

DISTRIBUTE TO ECRI
TEACHERS

FOLLOW-UP CHECKLIST

FOR ALL

ECRI TEACHERS

The following is a checklist for you to use to prepare for the ECRI trainer's visit to your room.

1. _____ Name tags for teachers

   _____ Name tags for students - large print

2. _____ Make certain that students have mastered prerequisite skills necessary before a specific demonstration can be given, e.g. before inferring the main idea can be taught, details and literal main idea need to be mastered.

3. _____ Write down your questions prior to "Jam Session." To remember them after a teaching day is sometimes difficult.

4. _____ Please remember the ECRI trainer is not evaluating you but wants to see how the technique is utilized and progressing and most importantly to assist you.

5. _____ Obtain a copy of the schedule for the day(s) the ECRI trainer will be in your school.

MAINE MASTERY LEARNING CONSORTIUM

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ON SITE ASSESSMENT FORM

School: _____

Position: _____

Date of Service(s): _____

Please Fill In
District: _____

The Consortium's services are aimed at helping teachers increase their use of mastery learning techniques. Your comments on these services are an important part of our continuing planning and assessment.

A. Please circle the level of usefulness of the following services designed to help you implement a mastery learning program. Please check if you have not received a particular service.

	Low 1	2	3	4	High 5	NA*
1. Observation by trainer	1	2	3	4	5	NA
2. Demonstration by trainer	1	2	3	4	5	NA
3. Team teaching with trainer	1	2	3	4	5	NA
4. Individual conference with trainer	1	2	3	4	5	NA
5. Group discussion with trainer	1	2	3	4	5	NA
6. Mini-workshop by trainer	1	2	3	4	5	NA
7. Downeast newsletter (ECRI)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
8. Telephone consultation with trainer	1	2	3	4	5	NA
9. Other (please specify)	1	2	3	4	5	NA

*Not Applicable - Have Not Received

B. List Weaknesses of Services	List Strengths of Services

C. Suggestions for Future Services